

Indiana House of Representatives

News and Information

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STILWELL OUTRAGED AT LOSS OF BRANCH SERVICES IN ROCKPORT

INDIANAPOLIS – Rockport is about to be the latest community to see critical services taken away by the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV), and State Rep. Russ Stilwell (D-Boonville) said area residents are right to be upset at the actions of the Daniels Administration.

"On September 17, the BMV will close Rockport's license branch, with only the hope that some services will be retained through an agreement with a local car dealership," Stilwell said. "If that agreement does come to pass, this new operation will only be able to handle transactions like vehicle titles and registrations.

"People who want to get new driver's licenses or have them renewed will have to travel 25 miles one way to handle that business in Dale," he continued. "With the price of gasoline hovering around the \$3 a gallon figure, that is a very expensive trip for the people who live in and around Rockport."

Rockport is one of nearly two dozen license branches that have been targeted for closure by BMV Commissioner Joel Silverman and the governor since the start of this summer. All have been shuttered under the guise of saving state funding and improving efficiency in government.

"I still have yet to see what these tactics will achieve, apart from making it more difficult for people to get new plates or have their licenses renewed," Stilwell said. "There have been no benefits derived for the good folks of Spencer County from this closure. The actions of the BMV have shaken the confidence that many small town residents have had in the service from their state government."

The changes in Rockport will have a greater impact on area seniors, Stilwell noted.

"BMV officials seem to think that these changes will not harm people because they can simply conduct their business via the Internet," he said. "Contrary to what they believe, not everyone has a home computer or easy access to one. Beyond the inconvenience afforded seniors in handling plates and licenses, it is difficult for me to see how they will be able to get the new photo ID that will be required for them to vote.

"Despite the protests of residents and local officials, it appears that this administration will not do much to prevent the drastic reduction in services for the people of Rockport and southern Spencer County," Stilwell added. "However, I can assure you that legislators on both sides of the aisle have heard the strong public complaints, and I would be shocked if some action to restore services didn't take place."

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This news release can be accessed on the Internet at www.IN.gov/H74